621 632 other municipalities (Aguacatenango, Cancuc, Tenango, San Martin, Sivaca, Guaquitepec, and Bachajon). Petalcingo belongs to the municipality of Tila, where Chol is spoken. The reason for these heterogeneous municipalities is that, within the political constitution of the state, only communities containing a sufficient number of inhabitants may achieve the status of municipality; the rest are considered merely as agencies of the municipality to which they have been assigned.

18 177 191 361 Another cultural variation stems from its ecological location. Communities of the southern zone, which have good lands, roads, mechanized transportation, and therefore greater contacts with the outside world, occupy a more advanced place in the process of acculturation, which is revealed by the scant number of monolingual Indian residents and by their better economic condition. Communities of the central zone, of irregular landscape and high demographic pressure, isolated, and without economic opportunities, are the poorest, most conservative, and most untrusting of the entire region. The northern zone has a high index of Indianness because of the number of those who do not know Spanish, but their economic condition is better than that of the central zone, because there is more opportunity to cultivate coffee and work on the plantations.

Historical Antecedents

175 179 648 I shall mention only the periods of greatest social significance in the past four centuries. The dates are approximate.

The period of the conquest, from 1524 to 1545, saw the most violent encounters and occasional skirmishes between Indians and Spaniards. The fortress of Chamula was taken by Captain Luis Marin in 1524, and four years later Ciudad Real (now San Cristobal de las Casas), destined to be the politico-religious center of the region, was founded.

The period of catechization and consoli-

[P 197-B]

175 177 648 [166] *dation of the Spanish dominance* lasted from 1545 (when Fray Bartolomé de las Casas arrived with 17 Dominican friars) until 1600. During this period a vast movement of population took place characterized by changes in location of some towns, reductions, and congregations.

During the entire 17th and early 18th centuries, the *period of slavery and royal land grants*, Indians were subjected to heavy tributes and to forced labor on the plantations and in transporation systems of the encomenderos, as *tememes* or carriers. Great caravans of 300–400 Indians, at the command of 10 or 12 Spaniards, transported goods the 1000 km from San Cristobal de las Casas to Veracruz. Many died from excessive loads and lack of food (B. Metzger, 1960, p. 19).

175 177 648 797 From about 1720 to about 1850 may be considered the *period of resurgence and autonomy of the Indian community*, when the system of royal land grants was suppressed, the Order of Dominicans was weakened, and Spanish authority became relaxed and even indifferent. Bishop Polanco sent a report in 1781 to the Royal Court of Justice of Guatemala, complaining of the abandonment of the Indians (Trens, 1942, p. 200).

> It is wondrous that in the town of Chamula, contiguous to Ciudad Real, Indians have need of interpreter to defend themselves or to beg for what they desire. So that they are as they were twenty years after their conquest, in such a state of blindness and ignorance they find themselves. In the town of San Andres, next to Chamula, there are many saints, old and indecent, whom I thought of burning. I did not do it because those evil souls say that they make them see clearly and alleviate their needs. I suspected a riot without having assistance.
>
> Oh my Lord, their audacity and shamelessness are such, that they even come to command in the church, without respect for the priest. They hold to the idea that the third person of the Holy Trinity is the Sun, because, they say, it was thus taught to them by the old fathers.

[P 198-A]

4: Villa Rojas, E.H, S. (1938-1948) 1969
NV9 Tzeltal NV9 4

175 The mistakes, lack of attention and preten-
177 sions of the Indians in regard to the Christian
648 doctrine, who they say they know, and the
797 ones instructed best in them, say as many heretic words as Christian, is consequence or necessary sequel of the lack of care in the secular and ecclesiastical government.

This situation became more and more acute owing largely to the political unrest which absorbed the attention of the authorities, unrest which culminated in the separation of Chiapas from Guatemala and in 1824 its incorporation with Mexico.

175 The next period, *invasion of lands by*
177 *Ladinos*, extends from about 1850 to 1911,
648 when the first sparks of the Mexican Revolution reached Chiapas. In this period Ladinos began to invade lands of the Indian communities by bribery or by force. Toward 1856 the Indians complained against the invasion of lands in San Martin, San Miguel Mitontic, San Pedro Chenalo, Cuncuc, and Tenejapa, but failed to halt Ladino inroads (Trens, 1942, pp. 274–75).

The history of recent times, from 1920 on, is marked by increasing support from federal authorities throughout the entire
[1787] republic. In the Tzeltal area progress has been slow, but constantly improving (see LaFarge, 1940; Beals, 1951).

Ethnographic Studies of the Region

114 In his first trip through the Mayance area
[101] in 1839 and 1840, Stephens (1841) visited the northern zone of the Tzeltal, from Ocosingo to Yajalon, going through Bachajon and Chilon.

Traveling the same route two decades later in the opposite direction, the French explorer Désiré Charnay recorded his impressions in a small book (1863).

In 1901 Frederick Starr (1902), from the University of Chicago, made a short visit to the region.

In 1925 Blom and LaFarge traversed from north to south a large part of Tzeltal territory, publishing their data in three chapters of their *Tribes and Temples* (1926–

[P 198-B]

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

137 Change in soil is
134 probably the reason for change in vegetation. The tropical forest grows on black humus soil and the pine country is underlain by a red sandstone which weathers into a heavy red clay. The contact of this sandstone with the limestone country on which leaf trees grow lies about an hour's ride north of the village of Bachajon.

[133] The pine country is very hilly, the trees are scattered over a carpet of vivid green grass cut by the strong red line of the soil of the trail like a scar (fig. 195).

114 It was like riding through a magnificent park, up and down the hills and across small streams. Our poor animals had a hard time on the slippery trail. La Farge's horse gave out, and he had to change his saddle to a spare animal.

361 The Bachajon Indian village came in sight, lying on a hill in the
342 middle of the valley. It was well after noon when we reached the
346 dilapidated, grass-roofed and mud-walled huts clustered around the huge ruin of an old Spanish stone church. The Indians use a new church which they have built of the same material as their houses.

122 The house of the Government agent lies in the middle of the
344 village and here we were quartered in a room, the floor of which had just been covered with a carpet of fresh pine needles.

123 The Bachajon Indians are reputed to be unfriendly to all travellers, so we were not surprised when the Indian chief of the village told us that he could not furnish fodder for our animals or men to carry some of our cargo. To all our questions he answered "Mayuk," or in English, "Ain't got none." But when the chief, a little later, heard from our Encanto men that we had been friendly to them, and that furthermore, we were friends of the big father President in Mexico City, he changed his attitude.

648 The Government agent is sent to the Indian village by the civil
[651] authorities of the neighbouring Mexican town of Ocosingo. He is
[653] supposed to collect certain taxes, raise labourers for public works in the Mexican town, and help the Indians with their affairs. He is highly unpopular among the Indians, who counteract his orders through a remarkable system of passive resistance. They say "yes" to everything and do nothing. The only reason the Indians tolerate
[273] him is because he keeps a small store and sells liquor. The Indian is very fond of sugar-cane rum, and every Saturday and Sunday
[123] all the villagers generally get drunk. The agent complained bitterly that the Indians were not selling him any food supplies and was astonished when they sold us chickens and eggs.

361 Most of the Bachajon Indians live hidden away in the bush. Only the families of the chief and the village officials live around the old church ruins.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

the old church ruins. The chief and the officials all spoke Spanish, but the only one who knew how to read and write was the town secretary, a 15-year old boy.

After dark the Indians gathered in front of the municipal house and presently some of the elders made signs that they wanted to talk to us. We followed them into the dark out of earshot of the agent, where the Indians told us of all their sorrows and difficulties, asking if we could not help them. They said that the agent tried to raise unjust taxes, that they were forced to do much work for the Municipal President of Ocosingo and did not have time to look after their own corn fields, and also that they were molested by the managers of the neighbouring properties. They asked us to bring their complaints before the Central Government, which we have done.

From there our route followed the main trail, or Camino Real, between Chilon and Ocosingo. A few hours ride through pine forest brought us to the top of a pass from where we had a magnificent view over the Ocosingo Valley. We could see the Indian village of Sivacá, and the white walled, red tiled houses of the Mexican town Ocosingo, lying on a green carpet of extensive grazing land. Down over the mountain side we scrambled towards the valley bottom, and by noon the hoofs of our animals clattered against the cobbled stones of Ocosingo's streets.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

131 the Guatemala border, which it overlaps at Gracias á Dios. They
101 do not reach the highest part of the mountains. For the most part, they live in isolated tribal groups, although in some places, notably in Ocosingo Valley, they are attached to *haciendas* and *fincas*. Much of the easternmost country marked in the maps as belonging to them and the Chol is actually uninhabited wilderness, or, if occupied at all, is Lacandone territory.

101 Their immediate neighbours of the Highlands are the Zotzil and
197 Chaneabal. The former speak a language differentiated from Tzeltal only by a shift of *a, e,* and *b* to Zotzil *o, i,* and *m,* respectively.* Chaneabal is spoken by a small group near Comitan. The people of that place say that the language is simply Tzeltal influenced by Mames contact. The list given in Appendix III, seems to bear this out. To the north, and around Tumbalá, are the Chol Indians, whose language is quite distinct, but, of all the other Mayance tongues, probably the nearest to the Highland group.

197 The language itself has been variously named Cendal, Tzendal, Cendales, Tzental, and Tzeltal. I have taken the latter form, as it most nearly represents the Indians' own form, *ts'eltal,* varied in careless speech to *tceltal.* The villages are spoken of as tribes, be-
197 cause each one forms a separate, self-governing unit. There is no
628 evidence of cohesion within the language-group as a whole save during certain periods of uprisings. Individual villages may resemble tribes of another speech more closely than they do those of
[104] their own. The Mexican spelling of Tzeltal names is given first, followed by the phonetic spelling (See Appendix III), and the translation, if known.

101 The Bachajon live on the threshold of the pine country. Their
[131] farms may be found hidden away in the thick jungle land of ma-
[137] hogany and palms, through which their little hidden trails lead to houses tucked away out of sight of alien travelers. Altogether, they
[161] are estimated at five thousand families, but it is doubtful whether evidences of more than fifty farms could be seen by one passing along the trail through the heart of their country. The capital,
[648] Bachajon Village, is among the pines. There, periodically, the Spaniards used to round them up, that they might be more easily policed, and for the benefit of the church established there. Once
[346] there was a fine, stone church and a neat Cabildo with white walls,
[344] colonnade, and tiled roof. Both have been wrecked by the Indians, apparently because they did not like to be reminded of alien domination, for from the wreckage of the old church, they took tiles to roof their new one, and they have a straw-thatched Cabildo for the Maestro, or government agent.

*Starr (1902) quoting Sanchez (1890).

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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The country near the village has been farmed out long ago; now the fields lie at a distance in the jungle. After every concentration, the Indians drift away again like blown smoke. Today most of the houses are rotten, sagging, with gaping doors. The paths are grown up with weeds, huge, old moss-covered crosses lean at crazy angles by the main trails. Over all broods the frame of the sacked church, huge stone walls with rank vegetation around them, and a twisted, unhealthy oak-tree on one side, like a composition by Piranesi.

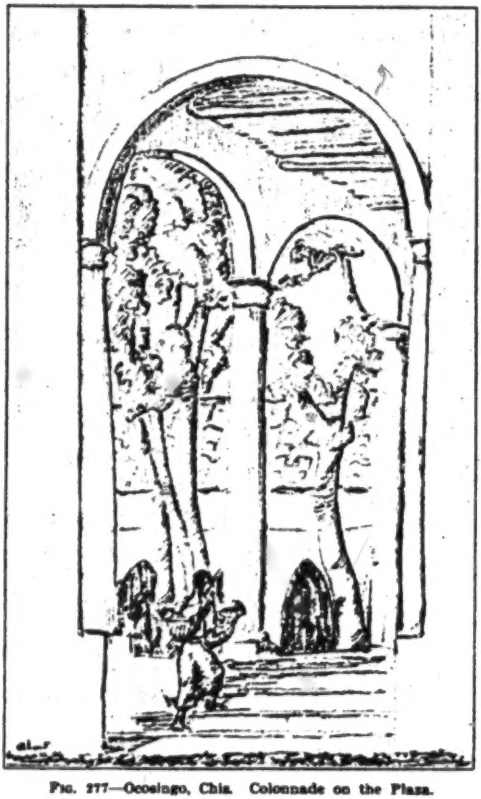

FIG. 277—Ocosingo, Chia. Colonnade on the Plaza.

Ocosingo Valley and its neighbours furnish a transition towards the real highlands. The valleys are fertile and green, ringed in with ranges of steep, rich hills. The soil in the lower parts is light; here palms and pines grow together, with a luxuriance of rich grass that makes an ideal grazing country. Through the valleys are large and small ranches of Ladinos and old Spanish families. The bigger ones, such as San Antonio, Quechil, and Achin in the Ocosingo Valley, San José Reforma and El Real beyond the San José Pass, and Tecojá in its own valley, each has a village of Indian labourers attached to them. The natives' houses are rather better that the average, and often tile-roofed (fig. 278). The Indians of each ranch function more or less as a tribe, governed by the owner of the ranch, conducting their own worship at its chapel. A few Indians own scattered, independent farms. Sivacá (*sivak ha'*, "Gunpowder Water"), near Ocosingo on the trail to Tenango, is a true village, self-governing, with its own *alcalde*, under the supervision of a Ladino *maestro*. All these groups come together at

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

628 796 certain times of the year for ceremonies, such as those at Chakálchib, and formerly at Campomtik, to be mentioned later. The Bachajon hold their own ceremonies at their village.

141 Physically, the Tzeltal, like all the Mayance Indians, are short, averaging probably about 160 centimeters (5 feet, 4 inches) for the 142 men, and slightly less for the women. Their build is slender, with stringy muscles, except for a good development of the calves. 147 Hands and feet are small and well-formed. Their slenderness is deceptive, for their great strength lies in their legs, back, and neck, seen in their ability to carry loads of 45 kilograms (100 lbs.) and upwards, all day up and down hill without undue fatigue. Taking in a tump-line a load under which they cannot rise from the floor

342 241 648

FIG. 278—Finca Tecojá, Chis. Houses of Indians attached to the Finca.

147 without help, they will carry it with ease. The lifting power of their arms is less than that of Americans or Ladinos. Their headform is 142 meso- to brachycephalic, and the cranium is small. Deformation in [304] the shape of a marked depression just above the juncture of the hair-line and the forehead, due to the use of a tump-line from early infancy, may be responsible for the conical appearance of the top of the skull. Noses are, on the whole, mesorrhine and small, with little appearance of the famous "Maya Nose," and then in a narrow form, lacking the width of nostril seen in pre-historic figures. Prognathism is slight, alveolar proganthism being the more common, particularly in children. Hair form is straight, coarse, and black. Gray hair or baldness are very unusual. Body hair, as far as could be observed,

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

is negative. Among the Bachajon, face hair was very slight, or negative, even on men of past middle age. At Sivacá the Alcalde, an elderly man, had a small beard. This is more commonly found among the Indians further in the Highlands. A slightly taller and more heavily boned type here also suggests the Highland influence (figs. 279-280-281-282-283).

Temperamentally, the Bachajon were by far the least pleasant Indians with whom we had to deal. They are drunken, revengeful, and murderous. The murders, usually the sudden outburst of a long-nursed feud, are sometimes so appallingly brutal that one would think them committed by an abnormal or degenerate people.

FIG. 279—Huxumachital, Chis. Bachajon men.

Yet, at the same time, these were the most independent Indians we met, controlling their own lives and way of living, and are left very much alone by the neighbouring Ladinos.

All the Indians are outwardly restrained, at least in the presence of strangers, although an accident, such as a narrow escape, shows them to be volatile and ready to express emotion. At home, they are cheerful, and laugh willingly. In bursts of feeling, as during an uprising, or one of the murders mentioned above, capable of any outrage, ordinarily they are not a cruel people. They showed themselves always responsive to friendly advances on our part.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

000 An excellent discussion of the character of the neighbouring Indians of Guatemala, which applies well to these, by one who has lived long among them, is found in Sapper's "Der Charakter der Mittelamerikanisch Indianer."

Fig. 280—El Encanto, Chis. Bachajon girls.

• 648 771 793 Before passing on to the native culture, a little must be said of the outside influences that do so much to mould it — the Church, the Government, and the Hacienda. The first of these occupies a very curious position indeed. While the Indians are ostensibly Christian, as will be shown later, in many ways they are still unconverted. It may be said, briefly, that they acknowledge two antagonistic worships. Of these, the Christian has publicly the upper hand. The Priests, accordingly, wield a tremendous influence among them, and did even more so in the past, when supported by the State. Our experience on this trip was that, on the whole, this influence was intelligently and beneficially used. To the Priests the Indians confide their troubles, to them they accord the greatest honour on the occasions of their visits to the villages. Yet, at the same time, the Indians conceal from them one-half of their worship, knowing them to be sworn to stamp it out.

[142] [291] [301] [302] →

[142] [291] [302] →

Fig. 281—El Encanto, Chis. Bachajon man and boy.

648 241 361 466 The Hacienda system has caused the formation of many small villages, as has been said above. In other cases, as with the Bachajon on the Encanto property, the Indians living at large on the distant lands of the

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

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haciendas, are held liable for a certain amount of labour each year, in lieu of rent. Should one of them fail to do his share, the owners are considered free to arrest him and bring him in. While so working, they are paid, largely in credit at the local store, and fed. On the haciendas with regular village establishments, and in other parts of Mexico, this system has worked smoothly in the past, because the workers found themselves cared and provided for, corn laid up for the future, money or credit ready for festive occasions, and so forth. But the more independent Bachajones seem amply able to take care of themselves, and do not relish working for a ranch miles from their homes, even when they acknowledge its ownership of the jungle in which they dwell.

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The payment of labour is seen again in relations of the Indians with the Government, which holds them liable to road-mending and municipal work, as a form of tax. Commonly, crimes are also punished by fines of such work. The system is irregularly applied. For instance, some Indians from Cancuc, who were carrying part of our outfit to San Cristóbal, were held up for two hours road-work at one point. Every Indian that came that way was similarly held. Starr (1902) reports the same experience. In San Cristóbal the right to collect any Indian for labor has been so abused as materially to harm the trade of the town. Quite serious crimes, as long as only committed by one Indian against another, are relatively lightly punished in this manner. It may be said, as far as concerns the tax-*corvée*, that the right of the Indians to go home again before staying away long enough to cause their crops to suffer is generally recognized, and the Indians themselves know when it is time to announce that they must leave. The whole system, however, leads to a certain amount of hard feeling on the Indians' part.

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FIG. 283—El Encanto, Chis. Bachajon men.

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Interwoven with these specific factors must be considered the Ladino's general attitude towards the Indian. To him, especially the town-dweller, the natives are barbarous in all respects, legiti-

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5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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mate butt of any joke, contemptible, and with no inherent rights. The native ceremonies and beliefs, even when closely parallel to their own, are considered mere ignorant superstitions. Only what is definitely Catholic is respected. Small shrines may be desecrated at will. Behind all this, mindful of past uprisings, lies a certain amount of definite fear of the subject people. There are, of course, many exceptions, especially among the more intelligent ranchers who from their patriarchal position or intimate relations have come to understand the natives as human beings.

The effect of all this on the Indian is suspicion of the ruling class, reluctance to impart information, distrust of friendly overtures. If one hails an Indian in the streets of a town, he will frequently run away. Once convinced, however, that an individual actually likes them, and is genuinely interested in them, their response is warm. We received many small favours and acts of friendship in notoriously hostile villages.

Fig. 283—El Real, Chis. Tzeltal girls.

In their culture these people belong to the general type characteristic of all Southern Mexico and at least the nearer parts of Guatemala. They depend primarily upon farming for their livelihood, with corn as the staple crop. Calabashes, melons, beans, tobacco, bananas, and cotton are raised. The farming is carried on by the same wasteful "milpa system" that has been described in Chapter XI, the old Maya method that was eventually responsible for the abandonment of many cities. In the case of the Bachajon, it has already become one cause for deserting their villages. The chief food is dried corn boiled with lime and ground by the women on the stone metates which were described in dealing with the Indians of San Martín Pajapa. It then may be baked on a flat griddle, making tortillas, or kept to drink with water as *pósole*. The one universal tool and weapon is the machete, varying in form from tribe to tribe, but always made by Collins & Co., of Hartford—part of one of the most amazing industries in the world.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

123 Visiting such a house is not a mere, simple social affair. Here,
• 648 on a steep-sided and slippery natural hill, lived a family belonging to a notoriously exclusive people. Our hostess seemed suspicious of the visit at first, although one visitor was a "Melicano," one of the pair who had already acquired a good reputation with the Indians, and his guide, Señor Aguilar, was known to be a friend. Men in felt hats and boots seldom visited those houses for good purposes; at the best, they might be expected to make off with a quantity of eggs and tortillas without paying their value—at the worst, the head of the house might be haled away for forced labour, or there might be a fight, the pigs killed, and the little hut set afire. The family consisted of a married couple their small son, and two grown girls. On our first visit the wife alone was there. She was at first sullen and a little frightened, but becoming reassured by degrees, showed herself to be a placid, dignified woman, pleasant, neat, and in many ways an ideal type of the traditional housewife. After we had given medicine to one of the girls for cold, and to the husband for mild fever, with a gaudy chromo of a saint to decorate the family altar, they came [342] → to take us for granted, and allowed us to see unfolding the harmonious, dignified family life, with its feeling of unvoiced yet real affection that is so typical of the American Indian where European contact has been slight. The 342 little house, only half walled, and small—about 15 x 13½ feet—was [353] always neat, its dirt floor swept clean, each small posession in its [356] place. There was a faint smell of wood-smoke and earth, with the scent of the rich jungle drifting in, the sound of low-voiced talk, wind in grass, or the grind and thump of the metates, now and then laughter.

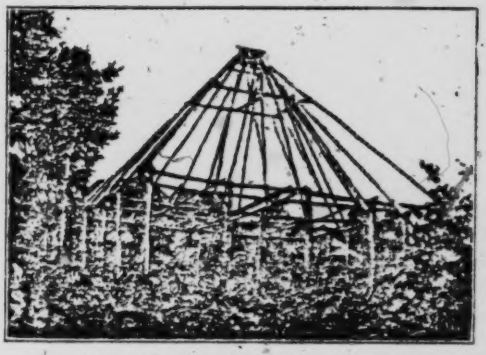

FIG. 287—Cancuc, Chis. Frame of house, illustrating type used in whole area.

The house was a rectangle, 4.90 x 4.20 meters (figs. 288-289), the front of the house being on a short side. The back and slightly less than half of the sides were walled with close-planted, upright [352] poles, without plastering. To wooden beds, *waixyivel*, like low tables, were built into the corners thus framed. Four corner-posts,

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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501 raft, *poi*, to cross rivers or make very short trips. The specimen observed at *Hol-ha'* (Head of the Water), was made of five cork logs averaging 22 centimeters in diameter and 3.25 meters long, held together by two cross-sticks lashed on with lianas. There was some space between each log, the width of the raft being 1.25 meters. It had a definite bow and stern, the logs at the forward end being cut to an edge, "to cut the water." These rafts are propelled by a pole, preferably of mahogany, the one observed being 2.50 meters long. They are moored by thrusting the pole through a crack between two of the logs, into the bottom of the stream.

• 648 As one would expect, the old, complicated organization of priests and rulers, the aristocracy of pre-Conquest days, has been utterly swept away. Today, in their social organization, one may trace a little of the feeling of the old times, but the system is the creature of Spanish contact. On the haciendas there are no native officials save those who preside over the fiestas. The owner of the hacienda maintains a patriarchal sway over his workmen, governing them in every respect. Among the village tribes at Bachajon and Sivacá life is still influenced by the obligation to work for the government or the ranchers, although the independent nature of the Indians has won for them a good deal of self-government. Those of the Bachajon living on land belonging to ranches find themselves under a dual system, although the scattered location of their dwellings, deep in the jungles, minimizes the power of the Ladinos.

621 The tribes are very different from those of North America. From our brief observation, it appears as though there was none of that deep feeling of loyalty towards the group, of essential, almost mystic unity with the other members that characterizes our own Indians. Similar customs, common interest, and geographical proximity hold each Tzeltal group together; bonds that are easily broken. [609] Should an outsider attack the common weal by seizure of land or [578] by any other infringements, he will find the tribe solidly united against him, but at the same time it may be, and often is divided 627 within itself by many quarrels. The Bachajon carry out long feuds between families and individuals in the form of occasional murders. These have their origin in delayed retribution for some wrong received by one party from the other, for which, in turn, there is retaliation, and so on indefinitely.

For instance, the murder committed while we were at Encanto was the climax of a long-nursed grudge, and almost immediately afterwards there were indications that from that fight would arise 648 many others. Occasional attacks on ranchers are also usually carried

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

out by a small group bearing a grudge, although in this case the tribe as a whole stands more solidly back of the offenders. 648

The Bachajon exhibit internal dissension and strife to an unusual degree. There are many small, outlying sub-groups, some of which are more or less openly at war with the main body. In the description of Zona Sala oil camp (Chapter VIII) something has already been said of the settlement there of men driven away on account of the misbehaviour. They still call themselves Bachajon and maintain some slight intercourse with the tribe, although they are quite inimical in their attitude towards Indians passing through on the way to Palenque. There are other such settlements in different parts of the jungle, although these, having most recently split off, are the most hostile. 628

What group loyalty the Bachajon have centers around the deserted village that bears their name. It was described at the beginning of this chapter. Founded under compulsion, deserted whenever possible, its church and Cabildo in ruins, none the less it is their focal point, jealously guarded from intrusion. These Indians have had the same experience as our own; the European comes first as a visitor, then a few settle for trade, then comes a host in their footsteps, until soon there is no place for the Indian, and he finds himself an intruder in his own home. Against this sequence of events, so common in our history, the Bachajon protect their land by an attitude of unremitting hostility. Travellers may pass through, but no trader may set up even a lean-to bower under which to display his wares, save during the few days of their main fiestas, although it would be a great convenience for them to have a store nearer than Ocosingo. 621 609

The destruction of the Spanish-built church and Cabildo, with the substitution for them of native edifices, is curious. The feeling probably is that when they do congregate in their capital for a fiesta, they do not wish to be confronted by evidences of alien domination. 829

The strongest actual unit is that of the individual family, the man, his wife, and children. Indians who are forced, for one reason or another, to go into hiding in the jungle, will run great risks to return and fetch their wives and children. Even beyond this smallest group there is a little feeling, a man's relatives by marriage or blood often joining to support him in a feud, or to revenge a wrong done him. Similarly, the relatives of the individual who committed the wrong are held in some degree liable to punishment, although there is no formal rule of collective responsibility, the action taken depending largely on individual inclination. 593 594 602 627 [672]

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

Bachajón
Sivacá

621 Bachajon and Sivacá are governed through native officials selected from among the men of repute in the tribe by the Mexican Government, more or less in accordance with the Indians' wishes. They serve for definite terms, usually two years, and may be reappointed. Bachajon Village, organized when the whole tribe was concentrated there, has two complete administrations, each with a 624 president, council, and secretary. At Sivacá the only official is the *alcalde*, who carries as insignia a staff, *barra*, 1.50 meters long, decorated with a double cross in black at the head. The secretaries [212] are chosen primarily for literacy; the others are older men of influence in the tribe. The great respect with which they are treated by the natives indicates that the selections accord fairly well with those they would make themselves.

• 648 651 Each group is in the charge of a resident Mexican official called the *Maestro*, corresponding to our Reservation Agent. He is appointed by the Presidente Municipal of the local government. He is paid with taxes collected by himself from the Indians in produce or money, to which he adds commissions obtained from his services as a labour agent, the profits of trade in a few staples, and receipts from travelers, for whom his house is the official guest-house.

648 622 621 Ordinarily the *Maestro* does not give his orders directly to the Indians, but works through the native president, who may openly oppose him if he see fit, though he is in some degree bound to obey. The influence and power of the *Maestro* depends upon the individual, and on the temper of the Indians under him. In extreme cases he will send for troops, a measure greatly dreaded, as the soldiers, once arrived, may stay indefinitely, helping themselves freely to the pigs and chickens of the natives, and generally making themselves objectionable.

648 622 624 In addition to those appointed by the Government, the Indians accord obedience and respect to a considerable body of purely native officials. The only ones fulfilling a civic function are the class known as *Principales*, who exist chiefly among the Bachajon. They are men who know how to read and write Spanish, living in places more available to the outlying Indians than the Secretaries at Bachajon Village, and are usually men in whom confidence is reposed. Although they hold their position without official selection, but by general consent, they are recognized by the Mexicans with whom they deal as holding a sort of power of attorney for their people. They examine and sign written documents, and compose communications from the Indians to the Government. Through this they gain an influence with which, if they be men of force, they may become leaders of real power in their own districts. A *Principale* whom we met at El Encanto, where he had come in to buy salt, was

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

the informal chief of one of the semi-separated, turbulent groups already described. He was a well-built, square-faced, sullen yet cunning looking fellow, with a long scar from a machete cut across one cheek, and credited with a number of murders.

The shamans or medicine-men, *poci'*, although primarily doctors, have a quasi-priestly status, the result of the intimate relation of prayer and healing, of which more will be said later. They are honored accordingly as holy men, as well as for the power conferred by their knowledge of medicine and charms. A shaman obtains his position by some years of study under another, who teaches him both medicines and prayers. His repute largely depends upon the results of his practice.

Certain older men are selected annually to have charge of the fiestas, or saint's day celebrations; they have charge of all preparations and of the conduct of the fiesta, as well as being usually responsible for the care of the various sacred properties during the year. These officers exist in the hacienda groups as well as in the tribes. At the Finca Tecojá, where a fiesta was observed in progress, they were an amiable pair of rather drunken old men, known as *Caporales,* and at most places, in common with other officers holding posts of Spanish derivation, they were known by Spanish names. Interestingly enough, in the villages with the Governmental organization described above, they rarely coincide with the Government appointees, although this may be partly due to the fact that they are usually selected from among the oldest men. In Guatemala these semi-church officers often are a mask for tribal positions of real power, as was found to be the case with the *tcimañ* of Jacaltenango, who will be described in writing of that place (Chapter XIX). Here their influence and prestige was relatively slight, save during the period when their duties placed them in charge.

Almost the only trace of pre-Conquest feeling is to be found in the great reverence shown towards all shamans and Government appointees. An ordinary Indian will offer food, drink, or tobacco to all men of authority present before taking anything himself, even though it means the consumption, for instance, of almost all of a bottle of *aguardiente* before he gets any at all. We saw a chief at Tenango, where the same system prevails, take a lighted cigar from an Indian's mouth, giving him instead some unrolled tobacco leaves. When first coming into the presence of such men, or passing them on the road, an Indian will take off his hat, bowing deeply; the chief or shaman touches the Indian's forehead, and he goes on. This is performed with grace and dignity. It is known as *k'ol-tanup,* "head giving" (*k'ol* from *hol,* head). Instances were observed of thus

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

paper, brightened with colour added by a cigarette package, a label from a tin of beets in a deep red, a joke in German about the fall of the mark, of which the prevailing tone was pure viridian, and a page of advertising from the Saturday Evening Post. We gave this family a chromo of a saint, which was immediately framed with a sort of wooden box, and set up beside the cross. The table below was used for laying odds and ends on, such as the spindle and a couple of empty aguardiente bottles.

Incense, *pom*, and candles, both extensively used by the Indians today, had a place in the old Maya ritual similar to that of the Catholic Church.

The Priest is an important figure to the Indians. They come to him with respect to tell him their troubles, and receive him into their villages with rejoicing. At the same time, there is no doubt that they deliberately hoodwink him as to the orthodoxy of their faith.

Although it includes several non-Christian elements, a description of the fiesta observed at Tecojá will give a fair idea of the Tzeltal's church observances. Tecojá ranch has a village of about twenty houses attached to it. The fiesta was held on the twenty-second and twenty-third of June. By custom, the ranch had to allow the Indians this time off, as well as accepting the lowered efficiency on the following "cold grey dawn of the morning after." The owners had, moreover, to provide the rum for the whole celebration, in this case, two demi-johns.

The ranch chapel was thrown open and decorated with fir branches and streamers. The proceedings were in charge of two older men, called *caporales*, who were distinguished by a cross-belting of red handkerchiefs. One house was set aside for the celebrations, in front of which was a table and three triangular, crimson banners with gold edges. By these drumming and flute-playing went on irregularly. Here was the official dispensary for rum, which was given out by the *caporales*. Inside the house, a palm-thatched one with stick walls, about fifteen feet square, some thirty Indians, men and women, were squatting against the walls. There was an orchestra of a guitar and a mouth-organ, occasionally augmented by the piper, who would wander in from outside. This individual, although most amazingly drunk, managed to maintain his musical ability until he fell asleep. The tune they played was like a rather wistful jig, but the time was lively. To this four couples danced, the men facing the women, with a shuffling step not unlike waltzing. They kept very much in one place, but occasionally changed sides. The dancing was evidently a serious affair. This type is called in Spanish *zapatea*, in Tzeltal, *ahk'Out*.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Tenango

We had a better chance here than anywhere else to look over the village government. It being Sunday, all were present, the *Presidente Municipal*, the *Secretario*, and council of *Regidores*, elderly men, grave of mien, with small, black goatees. The ordinary villagers treated them with the greatest respect. Each official carried a silver-headed cane with a red ribbon tied to it and the name of his office inscribed on the head. They are appointed to their offices by the government with the ratification of the village. The Maestro works entirely through them, and their orders are absolutely obeyed. Indeed, owing to the independent nature of the Tenangeros, the Maestro is rather like the ambassador of a powerful foreign nation persuading the local government, through tact and very gentle pressure, to behave.

We finished our survey about noon, the Indians appearing unwilling to have us enter their houses. For the rest of that day we spent our time working up our notes into good shape, then teaching the gift chickens to do tricks until Lazaro claimed them for the pot, and in dodging the local officials who, having got themselves slightly tipsy in honour of the Sabbath, came importuning us to give them cigarettes, of which we ourselves were short.

Both that night and the night before, traveling traders built their little pine fires on the mud verandah of the Cabildo. In one case it was a Mexican and an Indian, in the other two Mexicans, to be distinguished from Indians only by the cut of their trousers and a donkey. They travelled with their big packs on a tump-line, long staff in hand, for all the world like a living re-incarnation of the traders shown in the pre-Columbian drawings of the codices (fig. 320). In old times they traded parrots, macaws, obsidian, textiles, jade, and later, gold and copper. Now it is a business of cheap watches, gaudy cloths, and ten-cent jewelry, bringing Connecticut, Hamburg, and Orizaba down to a fiesta in Bachajon village, following the old trade-route along which we were going, in the other direction, to San Cristóbal. Very few of the present Indian tribes

Fig. 320.—Travelling Aztec Merchant. Drawing after the Codex Laud.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Tzotzil NV11

Tze 142 Tze 291

The men are tallish and the majority of them have sparse, black beards. They wear plain, white cotton tunics and short trousers, sashes, and hats of the sombrero type. The women wear the usual short, blue skirts. Their blouses are cut with a square neck, around which are embroidered three bands, each about two centimeters wide, of red, yellow and red. At the corners, little imitation tassels are embroidered in the same colours.

Tze 621 623 Tze 115

We were told, by an unreliable informant, that this village was remarkable for its independence. Its officials are chosen by the natives alone, and run through a regularly prescribed *cursus honorum* from secretary up to president, and then on to the council of elders. Government laws and orders sent to the village are debated by this council and are not published unless approved by them.

Tze 323

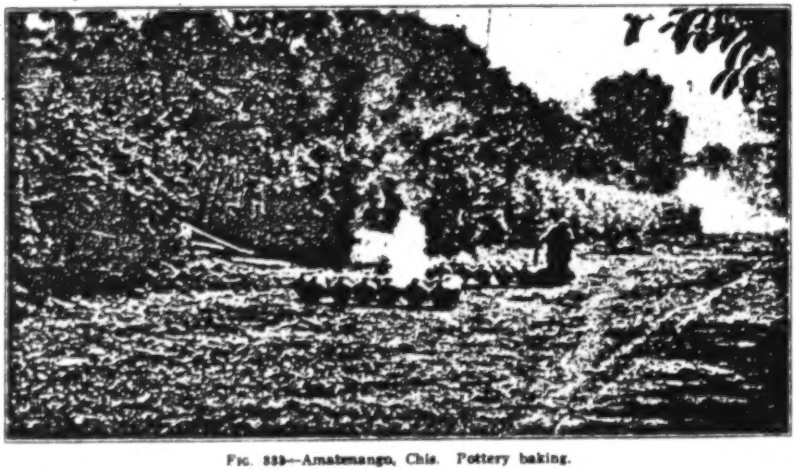

Fig. 838—Amatenango, Chis. Pottery baking.

Tze 584 323 606

We were also told that in case of marriage each party works for his or her prospective in-laws, and that the girl at that time learns pottery making, taking over the mother-in-law's specialty.

Tze 648 434 171

While there was no way of checking up on this information, it is true that there is no Maestro at Amatenango, and that the Indians seem to be an unusually self-respecting and self-reliant lot. Of all the Tzeltal people observed, they were the only ones who seemed to compare with the Zotzil-speaking Chamulas in energy and prosperity.

Tzo 114 137

Returning to ourselves and our trip. We left Tenejapa on the following morning by a winding, broad road climbing to a pass in

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

241 442 443 [489]

members entry to the ejido colony, an area where traffic was formerly excluded because of the monopoly by the large trucking companies. Both the fruit and root of chayote are sold in August by some families who have a supply over consumption needs. It is brought along with pottery to the market of San Cristóbal where it is sold to *regatones,* retail sellers who have stalls.

Decisions as to what crops to plant are not responsive to market fluctuation. With the major emphasis on subsistence crops, the farmers have little margin of land on which to experiment with profitable but risky ventures. They have little knowledge or experience. There are no full-time specialists in market operations, although the truck drivers may gradually assume a greater role in this respect.

241 442 443 439 [489]

Very few Indians of the region, and none of those in Tzo?ontahal sell corn to the National Warehouses (Almacenes Nacionales de Deposito), although the warehouses offer prices higher than the going market price for corn. (940 pesos per ton in comparison to 500 to 600 pesos at harvest or 800 pesos offered a few months later by wholesalers who come to town). The reason for their failure to take advantage of the higher market price is that they do not have sufficiently large crops to pay the transportation costs of 28.75 pesos or the "tip" to ensure that their crops will not be declared substandard because of impurities, rotten kernels, insects, or excessive water content. In addition to that, they must spend time at the warehouses and in traveling. The alternative to the sale of crops to national warehouses is sale to wholesalers.

471 648 [494]

Dealing with external agencies. Entering into competitive areas where they were formerly excluded, the Indians are encountering opposition from competitors and are the prey of departmental and state government agents. The reduplication of bureaucracies at the state and departmental level means that they will be subject to the double "bite" or *mordida* if they pursue their enterprises. Operating on minimal capital, they are not able to fulfill all the requirements, or buy all the necessary permits and licenses. Because of monopolization of certain traffic by the larger syndicates of truck owners, they proceed without permits and are often caught.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

474 The strategies the cooperative members have developed in their frequent
• 648 tangles with state police illustrate the combination of custom and innova-
661 tion. When caught red-handed, they may respond by playing the stereotype Indian role. "We don't know anything. We are just poor Indians. How do you expect us to do what the law says?" This is hard for the Ladino authorities to resist, since it feeds their own sense of superiority. But it does not always work, and so the Indians have devised secondary resources. They put the departmental police at each terminal of their usual route between Las Casas and Comitán on a regular monthly mordida pay-
[693] roll of 50 pesos each. When trying to extend their operations, they hire a lawyer. A recent coup has been the acquisition of a permit to truck corn from Villa las Rosas and other ejido settlements that have been recently colonized. The appeal was made on the basis that they are a nonprofit cooperative of ejidatarios. With the permit, they now undercut the price of their own competitors in the town as well as of the large companies. Law-
474 yers are beginning to advertise themselves in newspapers as "Friends of
693 the Indians" and are in some cases specializing in this new patronage, which they receive from other communities as well as Tzo'ontahal. The professional relationship bypasses personal ties which formerly limited the development of Indian leadership.

177 The self-development occurring in Tzo'ontahal may appear paradoxical
178 if we do not understand the internal dynamics by which change is con-
474 tained within an existing equilibrium. The cooperative association has
621 been adopted as a technique for socializing the risk of making a profit.
648 The truck, although currently used in an uneconomic operation, is a sym-
[493] bol of power in the struggle for a position in the regional markets and in the intracommunity factional strifes. The usual patron-client system is being reversed as the Indian puts the Ladino on his payroll to secure evasion from the law. In the changes which are occuring, the defensive structure of the corporate community is a means by which the Indians are entering into national life not on the lowest rung of the social ladder, but on terms they are setting for themselves. In the new enterprises, the Indians combine old ploys with new strategies. Confronted with legal threats from the outside world, they play the colonial game of defensive ignorance.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

tural opposition between the two sides of the dual division. In this case, resolution came with the intercession of federal troops.

When curing was a controlled profession, with a hierarchy legitimizing entry and exit, the power of the curers was directed toward guarding the village against evil as well as curing. In the 1940s, the loss of one leader by death and the other's jail sentence meant loss of control over entry into the profession. A growing suspicion and discontent with the curers as a group, laying upon them the responsibility of much of the witchcraft, is reflected in the account of another older informant:

> *Formerly when the curers J. C., A. A., S. K., and J. D. were alive, they walked in common. The people were in accord with the curers because they watched over the peublo. They knew about medicine, and so people of Alannantik went to ask them favors to cure them and also the people of Ahk'olnantik went to ask them favors.*
>
> *But then, after they died [about 1940], the principales did not dare fight the curers because they had animal spirits, and the principales themselves didn't—they were just honorable people.*

The doubt about the civil authority's control over the curers has increased since young leaders have taken the leadership in the town. One informant said, "When there are young people in the cabildo, they can't keep control of the curers, but the old people in the cabildo can." With the relaxation of restrictions on entry into the curing profession, following the loss of leadership and the ranked hierarchy, curers were no longer restrained by professional standards. When drunk, they bragged of their power to do evil as well as to do good. The first killing of a curer accused of being a witch occurred in 1937. He was working in Pinola when he was shot. The dead curer's widow wanted to bring his body back to be buried in the town cemetery, but the request was refused by the judges. This suggests that the town authorities agreed with the accusation, since it is the custom to return the dead to the town for burial. Other assassinations by individuals occurred in 1943 and in 1950. During this period, the civil officials sanctioned the assassinations of persons accused and convicted of witchcraft. When someone wished to kill a man suspected of witchcraft, they would go to the town hall and ask for permission. After a re-

000 animals. The domesticated animals include dogs, horses, burros,
231 cattle,[1] hogs and chickens.

311 To summarize, the villages are located in the same ecological zone. In addition to this, both villages have extended their cultivated lands into the lowlands, down to about 1,500 meters above sea level, where semi-tropical and tropical products are grown (Kaplan, 1956-57, 1958; Wagner, 1959, Part II, Section 5).

Archeology

172 Although the Chiapas Highlands seem to have been occupied from the late Pre Classic, Local Phase Sak (Adams, R.; 1961:342) the first evidence of occupation within the valleys belongs to the Late Classic and Early Post Classic. A few archeological sites of this period are located on the tops of small hills and ridges around the flat-bottomed areas in which today's towns are located.

Adams (1961) interprets the sites as having been independent communities, characterized architecturally by a lack of attention to ceremonial structures, conspicuous absence of sculpture, and a certain emphasis on fortifications and defensive positions, indications of some sort of warfare. Surrounding the sites there is evidence of small hamlets and of agricultural terracing, but

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[231] [177] [648] [1]Cattle were introduced in the area a long time ago, but were not adopted by the Indians of Amatenango and Aguacatenango until very recently. They are more and more of a problem for the milpa agriculturalist, because with the system of open range grazing, the cattle constantly invade the milpas, and are a continuous threat for the villager, plus a source of friction between Indian and Ladinos, especially cattle ranch owners.

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

172 the density of occupational refuse suggests to him that the populations were concentrated on the hill sites themselves.

During the Post Classic period the valleys of Amatenango and Aguacatenango were apparently unoccupied. This correlates with a shift in the total settlement pattern of the area, from small well defended valleys to large, more strategic positions such as the ones on the Plateau Summit of San Cristobal de las Casas.

Ethnohistory

175 Historical documents tend to confirm that the valleys of Amatenango and Aguacatenango were not occupied by any large nucleated settlements upon the arrival of the Spaniards. They do not appear in the first accounts of the Conquistadores. The earliest reference to Amatenango is 1586 and to Aguacatenango 1605, perhaps indicating that the former inhabitants were reducidos (concentrated in villages by the Spaniards) somewhat earlier. These first references occur in connection with grants of encomienda (i.e., they were tributaries of a Spanish lord, or Encomendero) (Simpson, L., 1929:1950).

175 361 621 648 Both communities were formed, as far as we can tell from the scanty evidence in the primary sources, by the Spaniards, in agreement with the policy of reducciones (concentration of population in villages) of the encomiendas initiated in the sixteenth century (Calnek, 1961, Appendix III). Each one of these settlements was formed of two separate pueblos, one incorporated within the other, which later appear in other documents as parcialidades.

175 Thus, the village of Aguacatenango was created by joining the
361 parcialidades of Aguacatenango and Quesaltepec, while Amatenango
621 was composed of the parcialidades of Amatenango and Sacatepec.
648 It is not possible at present to identify more closely the social groups that the Spaniards called parcialidades.

[797] It is probable that each parcialidad was composed of several lineages and clans, but up to the present time no one has done a comparative study of name distributions on available censuses or other similar materials, nor has any record been found, which explains the procedures used by the Dominican Friars (who controlled the reducciones in the area) when they reorganized
175 the populations of the territory.[1] In central Mexico the term
171 parcialidad refers, in the primary sources, to the four divisions
621 of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec Capital, but they also refer to the
175 barrios or calpuls (Caso, A., 1959). In Chiapas it is normally
621 used to mean the sub-divisions of pueblos reducidos. It is known,
648 however, that the parcialidades were originally separate groups of people which were independent social units. Even after the reducciones they kept important elements of their organization separate, including their political officers, who were responsible for complying with demands made by the Spaniards for tribute and labor. Some of the separate political functions have been re-
174 tained up to the present. It is also safe to assume that each one
621 of the parcialidades was an endogamous group; both Aguacatenango

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[1] The new documents are still unavailable. They have been reported by Edward Calnek in the National Archives in Guatemala, and by Dr. Vicenta Cortez in the Madrid Archives, Spain.

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

175 161 area as a result of recurring epidemics. It has taken 180 years for the villages to double their population while Mexico as a whole has tripled it in 144 years, from 1793 to 1937 (Simpson, W., 1937: 149).

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHY: POPULATION INCREASE

Year	Amatenango	Aguacatenango
1778	576	568
1958	1,337	1,034

621 166 More recently both communities have sent out some of their population to form colonias (small dependent settlements) in their rural periphery. Amatenango has formed four separate rural barrios (La Grandeza, Madronal, Yetahwitz and Patzhwitz) situated within view of the town, and two colonias (San Vicente and San Caralampio). Aguacatenango now has one colonia, called El Puerto. Most of its inhabitants are related to those of Aguacatanango; they moved down to El Puerto in the last thirty years, after the community lands had been expanded in that direction.

Political History

175 648 During Colonial times and the Independence period both villages shared the same types of relations with the outside world; these were mainly the payment of tribute in kind and services to the Spanish and Ladino (Local Mexican) authorities.

When first mentioned, the villages appear to have been

175 under the administrative jurisdiction of the Provincia de los
•648 Llanos.[1] They were, and still are, part of the same Curato of
[793] the local Catholic Church, which was under secular clergy, as opposed to most villages in the area which were under Dominican jurisdiction. Up until 1854 they were subjected to the same changes with respect to the administrative districts of the State of Chiapas (districts which were rearranged practically every time
175 there was a change of government). In 1854, however, the local
621 districts were reorganized into Municipalidades (the closest
648 English equivalent being a county); Amatenango became attached to
631 Teopisca, the nearest Ladino-Indian town, as a part of the ninth Municipio, while Aguacatenango became dependent upon the fourth Municipio of Comitan, together with the towns of San Bartolomé (also a mixed Ladino-Indian town), Totolapa and Concordia (Trens, 1942).

631 At the present time Amatenango is an independent Municipio,
621 having been separated from Teopisca in 1937, while Aguacatenango is an Agencia of the Municipio of Venustiano Carranza. Both com-
[692] munities are, however, attached to the equivalent ladino towns in
[851] similar ways because of their economic dependence, because such disputes as are not solved within the confines of the village are sent to the juzados of the towns, and because the offices of the Tax Collectors and Ejidos are situated in these ladino towns.

175 Neither of the two communities became directly involved in
669 the Indian Uprisings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,
621
631

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[1] San Bartolome de los Llanos; today known as Venustiano Carranza.

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Relations with the Outside World

Amatenango and Aguacatenango can be considered independent societies for the purposes of describing them, in terms of their internal features. Each one can be analyzed in terms of "the entities that compose it and their interrelationships" (Redfield, 1955:19). They have their own ecological adaptations and a set of cultural norms that preserve their style of life and justify it at the ideological level. They have their own "personality" and "life history." In a sense, they are those unique wholes which Redfield defined in "The Little Community" (1955): "a small settlement of people self-contained and distinct from all other" (Redfield, 1955:113). But because this is so, a description of their general outlines of life would not be complete without indicating their place in the larger society of which they form a part.

The Indian villages of Chiapas, such as Amatenango and Aguacatenango and many others, form part of a world larger than themselves, an extremely complex one, both socially and culturally.

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• 648

On the one hand, the Indian villages live within a local society which also contains settlements of Ladinos, local Mexicans who have a separate cultural tradition and social organization. On the other hand, although the Indian villages and the Ladinos' settlements are two quite distinct social types, one cannot be understood without the other.

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Mexico is a multiple society, characterized by two distinct cultural traditions, each significantly different in the extent of integration. Only part of the population of the country